

Awareness Training

Maine Youth Suicide Prevention

Education, Resources and Support—It's Up to All of Us.



John E. Baldacci, Governor Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner



Maine Youth Suicide Prevention



Today's Program Will Cover

- Language, Statistics, and Myths about suicide
- Warning signs and risk factors
- Basic intervention skills to use with suicidal behavior
- The aftermath of suicidal behavior

Language Considerations

Must AVOID:

“successful suicide”

“failed attempt”

Please USE:

“suicide” or “died
by/of suicide”

“non-fatal attempt”

Important to Understand:

“committed suicide”

“completed suicide”

“JUST a cry for help”

Please use:

“died by/of suicide”

“a suicide attempt”

More Americans Die by *Suicide* Each Year Than by *Homicide*

Suicide: 34,598

11th ranking cause
11.5 per 100,000

Homicide: 18,361

15th ranking cause
6.1 per 100,000

Almost 2X more people killed themselves than were murdered by others in 2007

Maine 5 year average 2003 – 2007

All ages: 166 per year

10 – 24: 20 per year

Maine 2007

Suicides 191

Homicides 21

Suicide in Maine

- Every 2 days someone in Maine dies by suicide. Every 2 weeks that person is a young person.
- Suicide is 2nd leading cause of death for Maine youth ages 15-24.
- Of every 5 suicides, 4 are males.
- Of every 10 youth suicides, 5 are by firearm, 4 by hanging.
- To add to this concern, is the extent of suicidal attempt behavior.

Attempted Suicides

*Estimated that there are
25 attempted suicides for each
death by suicide*



Suicide

Moscicki et al.

Attempted Suicides 4,775 Mainers

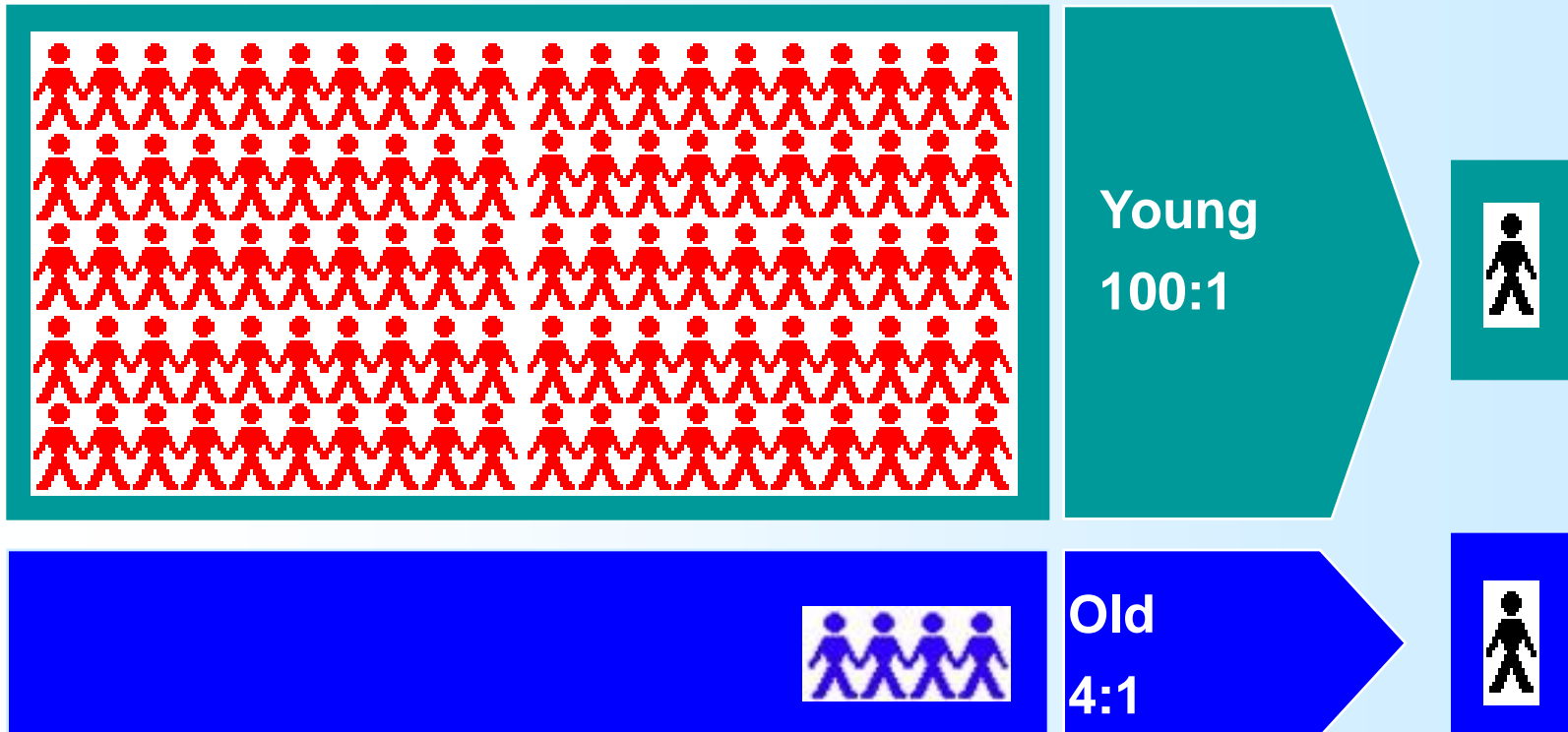
Ratio implies 864,950 suicide attempts annually in USA

Attempted Suicide & Age

Attempts are most common among the young

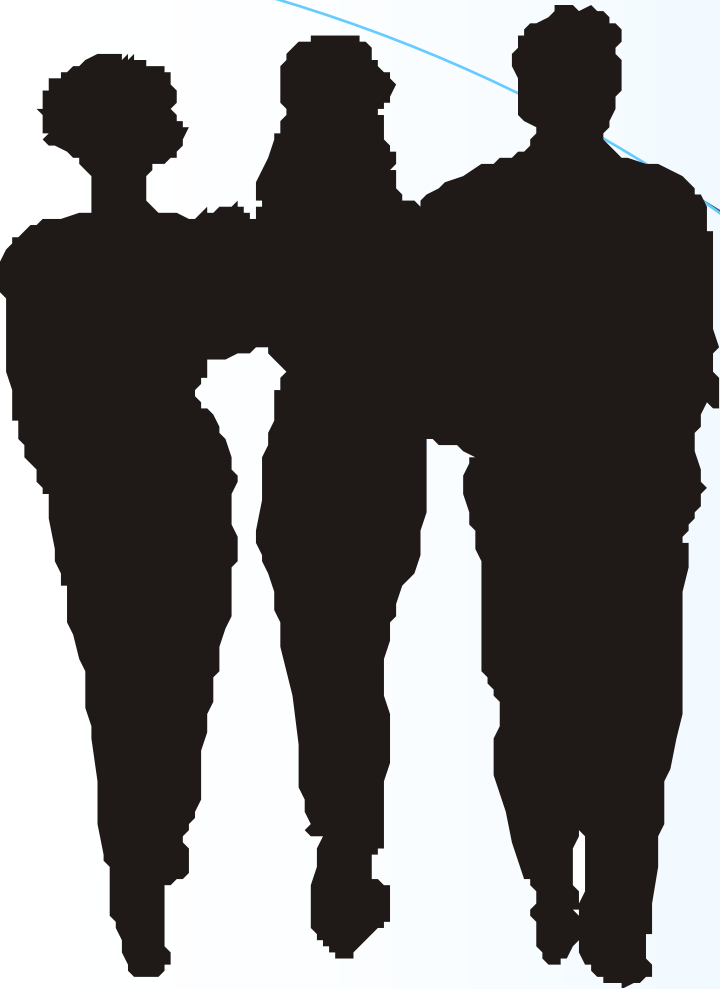
Attempted
Suicides

Suicides



Estimates of youth suicide attempts to completions are as high as 300:1

In the typical high school classroom...



1 male and 2 females have probably attempted suicide in the past year

Source: King (1997, p. 66)

Facts or Myths ?

- 1) **T or F** People who talk about suicide do not actually die by suicide.
- 2) **T or F** Suicide usually happens without warning signs.
- 3) **T or F** Talking or asking someone about suicide may plant the idea and cause a suicide.

In Summary:

- ❖ Youth suicide is a problem.
- ❖ We all need to learn about it.
- ❖ Talking about suicide can save lives.

Warning Signs

Risk Factors

Protective Factors

Definitions

- **Warning Signs**-the earliest observable signs that indicate the risk of suicide for an individual in the near-term (within minutes, hours or days.)
- **Risk Factors**-long standing conditions, stressful events or situations that may increase the likelihood of a suicide attempt or death. (Statistically significant)
- **Protective Factors**-the positive conditions, personal and social resources that promote resiliency and reduce the potential of suicide and other high-risk behaviors.

Warning Signs

What to Look For & What to Do

First Tier: Overt & acute signs of a suicidal crisis

- Are you or someone you love at risk for suicide?
- Get the Facts & Take Action.
- Call 911 or seek other immediate help when you hear, say or see any of these behaviors:
 1. Someone threatening to hurt or kill themselves
 2. Someone looking for the means (gun, pills, rope etc.) to kill themselves
 3. Someone talking or writing about death, dying or suicide

Warning Signs Mnemonic

(from AAS Consensus Working Group!)

- I Ideation** / threatened or communicated
- S Substance Abuse** / excessive or increased?

- P Purposelessness** / no reasons for living
- A Anxiety** /agitation / insomnia
- T Trapped** / feeling no way out
- H Hopelessness** / nothing will ever change

- W Withdrawal** from friends, family, society
- A Anger** (uncontrolled)/ rage / seeking revenge
- R Recklessness**/ risky acts / unthinking
- M Mood Changes** (dramatic)

Tier Two: Needs Mental Health Assessment, but not Necessarily a Mental Health Emergency

Seek help by contacting a Mental Health Professional or call for a referral if you witness, hear, say or see anyone exhibiting one or more of these behaviors:

- Hopelessness
- Rage, anger. Seeking revenge
- Acting reckless/engaging in risky activities
- Feeling Trapped (like there is no way out)
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from friends, family or society
- Anxiety agitation, unable to sleep/sleeping all the time
- Dramatic changes in mood
- No reason for living; no sense of purpose in life

Verbal Clues (Sometimes)

❖ Direct

I wish I were dead

I'm going to end it all

❖ Less Direct

I'm tired of it all

You'll be better off without me

What's the point of living?

Risk Factors for Suicide

Risk Factors are Found in Different Domains

Family Risk Factors

Personal /Behavioral Risk Factors

Environmental/Social Risk Factors

Risk Factors Have Different Conditions

Some are unchangeable (perpetuating)

Some are of serious concern (predisposing)

Some are acute (precipitating)

Risk Factors	PERPETUATING CONDITIONS (Unchangeable)	PREDISPOSING CONDITIONS (of Serious Concern)	PRECIPITATING CONDITIONS (Acute)
FAMILY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family history of suicide, mental illness, substance abuse ● Race ● Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unrealistic parental expectations ● Abuse (emotional, physical, sexual) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Major family conflict ● Exposure to suicide of family member ● Anniversary of death ● Moving often
PERSONAL BEHAVIORAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loss through death, abandonment, divorce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Previous suicide attempt ● Mental illness ● Substance abuse ● Extreme Perfectionism ● Poor coping/social skills ● Impulsive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current acute Mental Illness ● Severe stress/anxiety ● Isolation ● Rejection ● Relationship break-up ● Increased use of substances
ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inconsistent, neglectful or abusive parenting ● Sexual orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Experience of repeated loss ● Chronic severe stress ● Ongoing harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Active suicide cluster in community ● Access to lethal means ● Bullying, harassment ● Loss of freedom (e.g., incarceration)

From a Suicidal Person's Point of View

- **Crisis** point has been reached
- **Pain** is unbearable
- **Solutions** to problems seem unavailable
- **Thinking** is affected
- **Ambivalence** exists
- **Communication** of pain a must!
- **Invitations** to intervene are often extended

Invitations to Help

FEELINGS

Desperate Worthless
Angry Lonely
Guilty Sad

Hopeless
Helpless

ACTIONS

Giving away possessions
Withdrawal (family, friends, school, work)
Loss of interest in hobbies
Abuse/use of alcohol, substances
Reckless behavior
Extreme mood swings
Increased impulsivity
Self-injury (maybe)

THOUGHTS

“All of my problems will end soon”
“No one can do anything to help me now”
“I just can’t take it anymore”
“I wish I were dead”
“Everyone will be better off without me”
“I won’t be needing these things anymore”
“I can’t do anything right”
“I can’t think straight”

PHYSICAL

Lack of interest in appearance
Changes in appetite, weight
Change in sleep patterns

Protective Factors

- ✓ **Supports**-Supportive parents, friends, teachers & other caring adults
- ✓ **Skills** to think, communicate, solve problems, manage anger
- ✓ **Purpose & value in life**-hope for future
- ✓ **Personal characteristics** -good health, positive outlook, healthy choices
- ✓ **Safe Environment** – restricted access to lethal means

In Summary:

- ❖ There are always multiple risks
- ❖ There are almost always warning signs
- ❖ Suicidal behavior is complicated
- ❖ Protective factors are key to suicide prevention

Intervention--Why People Hesitate

- Inability/lack of knowledge
- Worry about doing/saying the “right” thing
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Belief in myths of suicide

What is NOT Helpful

- **Ignoring or dismissing the issue**
- **Acting shocked or embarrassed**
- **Challenging, debating or bargaining**
- **Giving harmful advice**

What IS Helpful

- 1) Show You Care—Listen carefully—Be genuine**
“I’m concerned about you . . . about how you feel.”
- 2) Ask the Question—Be direct, caring and non-confrontational**
“Are you thinking about suicide?”
- 3) Get Help—Do not leave him/her alone**
“You’re not alone. Let me help you.”

Practice Helpful Steps!

Open handout...

1. **Think up &** write 1 or 2 phrases or ways that YOU would use to “show you care.”
2. **Write** two other ways you might “ask the question” about suicide.
3. **List** two ways you would try to convince someone to “get help” and name 2 resources.

Resources for Help

- Statewide Crisis Hotline 1-888-568-1112 (24/7)
- Local Crisis Agency
- Hospital emergency room staff
- Physicians/health care providers
- Private Mental Health Clinicians and facilities
- Religious leaders
- Call 211
- MYSPP Web Site: www.mainesuicideprevention.org
- Information and Resource Center 1-800-499-0027

School Resources for Help

- ◆ Any Trusted Adult
- ◆ School Administrators
- ◆ Teachers
- ◆ School Nurses
- ◆ Social Workers and Guidance Counselors
- ◆ Peer Helpers and their Adult Advisors
- ◆ School Resource Officer

Our protocol is...

- When any concern is raised, contact

After an Attempt

- ❖ Support family/friends
- ❖ Acknowledge the impact, the fear
- ❖ Avoid judging, blaming
- ❖ Emphasize safety and removal of all lethal means from household
- ❖ Encourage appropriate help

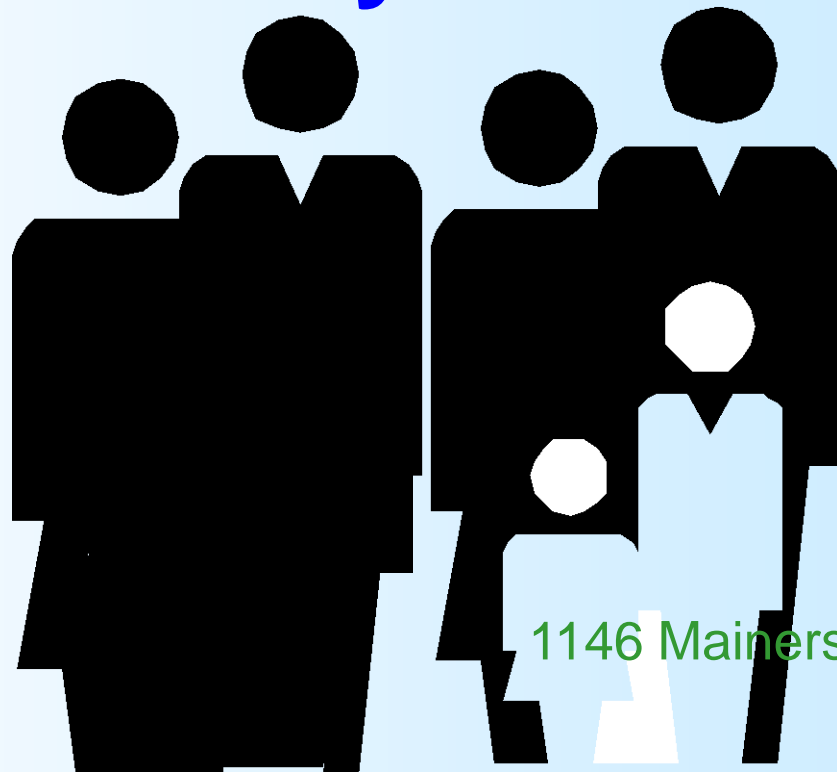
Number of Suicide Survivors

It is estimated that there are

6 survivors

for each death by suicide

A
“suicide survivor”
is someone who
has lost a loved
one to death by
suicide



1146 Mainers in 2007

Ratio implies at least 207,588 survivors *each year*

Survivors of Suicide

- Struggle to make meaning of the loss
- Suffer from overwhelmingly complicated feelings
- May take a long time to grieve
- Need understanding and support
- Youth survivors have special issues

How YOU Can Help After a Suicide

- ❖ Acknowledge the loss
- ❖ Share a special memory/story
- ❖ Use the name of the deceased
- ❖ Share your presence
- ❖ Acknowledge the good things
- ❖ Stay in touch
- ❖ Call local hospice center for grief support groups

Take Care of Yourself

- ❖ Acknowledge the intensity of your feelings
- ❖ Seek support, de-brief
- ❖ Share your feelings
- ❖ Avoid over – involvement
- ❖ Know that you are not responsible for another person's choice to end their life

Before You Leave...

Any Questions?

Thank You . . .

For learning about suicide prevention

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www.mainesuicideprevention.org